

XXXIX.—Obituary.

(Plate IX.)

RICHARD BOWEN WOOSNAM.

THE death of Lieut. R. B. Woosnam, killed in action in the Gallipoli Peninsula on June 4 last, adds another to the increasing list of workers in zoology who have given up their lives for their country in the great war.

Born at Tyn-y-Graig, Builth, Brecknockshire, on the 17th of November, 1880, the son of Bowen Pottinger Woosnam, he was educated at Wellington College. On the outbreak of the South African War he joined the 4th Welsh Militia, and was thence gazetted to the 2nd Worcester Regiment, with which he served throughout the South African campaign. After the war his taste for natural history prevailed against his military ardour, and he resigned his commission. On the outbreak of the present war he joined the 4th Battalion of his old regiment, the Worcesters, and proceeded to the Dardanelles, where he fell on June 4 last.

One who knew Woosnam intimately writes as follows :—

“ My acquaintance and subsequent warm friendship with Woosnam dates from the termination of the South African War, in 1903, after he had resigned his commission in the Worcesters. I had previously heard of him in letters from our mutual friend, the late Major Gerald Barrett-Hamilton, who had met him during the South African campaign, and had been much struck by his personal charm and by his unusual ability as a field-naturalist. About the same time I received a letter from Woosnam himself saying that he and a retired brother officer, Mr. R. E. Dent, with a similar taste for natural history, were anxious to make a collecting trip in Cape Colony, and desired to offer their services to the British Museum (Natural History), a proposal which was readily accepted. Their subsequent wanderings resulted in the formation of valuable collections of beautifully prepared specimens of mammals and birds from the Kuruman

district of Cape Colony, Bechuanaland, the Orange River Colony, and the Vaal River. The collection from Kuruman was of special interest, for it included typical examples of many of the species described by Sir Andrew Smith after his early explorations in 1834-6. Most of Smith's types had been purchased by the British Museum at his sale in 1838, but the species were very imperfectly represented in the national collection, and this fresh material was therefore of special value.

“On his return to England in 1904 I met Woosnam, and spent many delightful days with him talking over plans for future exploration while he was writing out his field-notes on the birds collected in South Africa. His was, indeed, an unusually pleasing personality, which at once attracted all with whom he came in contact. Good to look at, tall, rather slight, and cleanly built, full of life and energy; add to these physical attractions the finest character imaginable, strong, delightfully modest and simple, transparently honest. Altogether a man on whom one could absolutely rely on all occasions. As a skilled field-naturalist and taxidermist he had few equals, and few could handle a gun or rifle better, while in all sports requiring field-craft or skill he was proficient.

“In the early part of 1905 Woosnam accompanied Colonel A. C. Bailward on a journey from the Persian Gulf through western Persia to Armenia and across that country to the Black Sea. The fine collections of mammals and birds formed by him were presented by Colonel Bailward to the British Museum, and an account of the birds by Mr. H. Witherby with Woosnam's field-notes appeared in the ‘Ibis’, 1907, pp. 74-111. On his return from Persia he immediately joined me in making the final arrangements for a long contemplated exploration of the great range of mountains in Equatorial Africa known as Ruwenzori or the ‘mountains of the Moon,’ which had long attracted the attention of naturalists in all parts of the world. In Woosnam I found an ideal leader. The record of this great undertaking, which was so ably and successfully carried out in the face

of many difficulties, has been fully set forth in volume xix. of the Transactions of the Zoological Society of London (1909-10). His companions were Mr. R. E. Dent, the Hon. Gerald Legge, Mr. Douglas Carruthers, and Mr. A. F. R. Wollaston, all of whom ably assisted in securing the splendid results achieved by this famous expedition. They reached an altitude of 16,794 ft., the highest point, 16,815 ft., being subsequently conquered by the Duke of the Abruzzi. At the conclusion of their work on the mountain in November, 1906, Woosnam and Dent returned home by the Ituri and Congo route, and added more new and interesting specimens to the huge collections from Ruwenzori already sent home. On his return Woosnam read an interesting paper on Ruwenzori before the Royal Geographical Society, and in recognition of the signal services he had rendered to science on this and other occasions the Zoological Society of London awarded him their silver medal, and made him a corresponding member in 1910. He was elected a member of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1909.

“ Soon after his return to England Woosnam once more accompanied Colonel Bailward on a trip to the Caspian Sea and Elburz Mountains between February and May, 1907. Excellent collections were made, and, as on the previous occasion, presented to the British Museum, the birds being recorded in the ‘Ibis,’ 1910, pp. 491-517. From this expedition Woosnam returned in rather indifferent health; the sudden change from the Tropics to the high ground on the Elburz had brought on an attack of dysentery and subsequent colitis, from which he suffered for some time after his return to England, and did not finally shake off till 1909, when he returned to South Africa to explore the Kalahari Desert. On that occasion he was accompanied by the Hon. Gerald Legge, one of his companions on Ruwenzori. The principal object of this journey was to make a collection of the fishes of Lake Ngami, to which very special interest attached, as the lake was rapidly drying up, and the extermination of many of the peculiar species was probably only a matter of a few years. Birds were not neglected, and an account

of this part of the collection, with an itinerary by Woosnam, will be found in the 'Ibis,' 1912, pp. 355-404.

"In 1910 Woosnam was appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the vacant post of game warden in British East Africa, a position which he held till he returned to England a few months ago and rejoined his old regiment, the Worcesters, at Devonport. Thence he was sent to join the 4th Battalion at the Dardanelles, where he was killed on June 4 while gallantly leading his men in an attack on the Turkish trenches. As his colonel wrote, 'such men are few and far between; his name was specially mentioned for good and gallant conduct on June 4.'

"As game warden in British East Africa he was a great success, and brought his department into a high state of efficiency. He did his duty without fear or favour, but was nevertheless one of the most popular and highly esteemed men in the Protectorate. He has been justly described by one of his colleagues as 'the whitest man he ever met.' He was mainly instrumental in bringing together the International Conference for the Protection of Wild Animals in Africa, which met last year in London, and his carefully thought out and thoroughly practical plans were generally agreed to, and will no doubt come into operation when peace has been once more restored, but sadly will he be missed during the carrying out of them."

LEWIS NEIL GRIFFITH RAMSAY.

Although not a member of the Union, ornithology has suffered a great loss in the death, at the early age of 25, of Lewis N. G. Ramsay at Neuve Chapelle on March 21 last.

Born at Aberdeen on February 3, 1890, he was the second son of Professor Sir William Ramsay, the well-known archæologist and classical explorer. He studied at Aberdeen University and subsequently at Christ's College, Cambridge. He graduated M.A. at Aberdeen in 1910 and B.Sc. in 1913.

From an early age Ramsay was a bird-lover and amassed

a great amount of data regarding the avifauna of his native Aberdeenshire. He travelled through Asia Minor in the summer of 1907, and contributed an interesting paper on his observations there to the 'Ibis,' 1914, pp. 365-387. He also assisted Mr. Eagle Clarke in preparing an account of the ornithology of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition of 1902-4, himself contributing several sections.

In September of last year he joined the 4th Batt. Gordon Highlanders, becoming a sergeant. Later on he obtained a commission, and was sent with the 2nd Batt. of the same regiment to the front.

XL.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

Blathwayt on the Birds of Lincolnshire.

[The Birds of Lincolnshire. By the Rev. F. L. Blathwayt, M.A., M.B.O.U. Trans. Lincoln. Nat. Union, Louth, iii. 1915, pp. 178-211.]

It is a remarkable fact that, notwithstanding its size and its situation, which makes it the landing-place of many rare migrants, no complete list of the birds of Lincolnshire had yet been published until Mr. Blathwayt's, now noticed.

With the ornithology of Lincolnshire the names of John Cordeaux and Mr. G. H. Caton Haigh are always associated as well as that of the present author, but as compared, for instance, with Norfolk, there does not appear to be nearly so much activity among bird-lovers in Lincolnshire, although the opportunities for noticing and recording rare species, at migration time especially, in the narrow strip of country along the coast known as the "marsh" are very full of promise.

In the present list, which follows Howard Saunders's nomenclature and arrangement, 296 species are recorded, but of these at least 10 are doubtful.

Among the rarer species mentioned *Phylloscopus viridanus*, *Luscinola schwartzi*, and *Locustella lanceolata* were all obtained for the first time in the British Islands, at North Cotes, by Mr. Haigh, while the Bearded Tit, the Kite, the Bittern,

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